



Sheila Dixon

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***Mayor Dixon Calls for Congress to Override President Bush's
veto of Health Insurance for Children***

Baltimore, MD (October 15, 2007) – Mayor Sheila Dixon joined Congressman Elijah Cummings and Baltimore City Health Commissioner Dr. Josh Sharfstein, along with state health advocates and local working families, to publicly appeal for the U.S. House of Representatives to override President Bush's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP).

President Bush vetoed the reauthorization and expansion of SCHIP on October 3, 2007, and Mayor Dixon has responded by leading a coalition of mayors from across the country, as well as local leaders, in the fight for children's health insurance.

"This successful and popular program created 10 years ago with bipartisan support provides health insurance to more than 6 million children, many of whom live in our cities," Mayor Dixon said. "SCHIP reauthorization is not about politics or ideology. It's about giving our children a healthy start in life."

President Bush has offered to fund \$5 billion of the \$35 billion increase requested by Congress for the program, and has refused to expand the program until 95 percent of those currently eligible are enrolled. Bush's plan would eliminate coverage for thousands of Maryland children.

If Congress votes to override the President's veto, the proposed expansion of SCHIP is estimated to give health insurance to an additional 4 to 5 million children in this country who are uninsured. For Maryland, an override could mean up to \$945 million in additional federal funding over the next five years and the chance to insure some of the 132,000 children who are currently eligible for the program but remain without healthcare because of a lack of funding.

"SCHIP provides an integral safety net for those hardworking families who are unable to afford quality health insurance," said Dr. Sharfstein. "The bottom line is we cannot expect our children to succeed in school and in life without adequate access to basic healthcare."

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